# Tour de Fla': Celebrating Success and Lessons Learned Through the Florida Experience

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Celebrating the Past, Looking to the Future

US EPA's 10<sup>th</sup> Annual

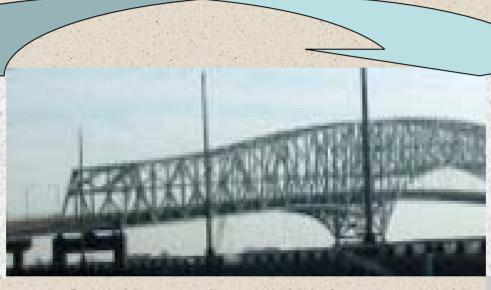
Community Involvement Conference

June 19, 2007

Jacksonville, Florida

## Importance of Community Involvement Coordinators

**Community Challenges** 



Community Solutions

- Community residents
  - **▶**Government
    - **Business**
    - **▶**Lawyers
    - **Engineers**
    - Academia



### Welcome to Florida



## SENSE OF PLACE: FUN FLORIDA



















AwesomeFlorida.co

Sea World, Orlando





## SENSE OF PLACE: Real Florida



## SENSE OF PEOPLE THE HEROS OF FLORIDA



- **❖**Quote
- Community
- Challenge
- **⇔** Gift
- Lessons Learned

## Meet Willa Carson

Founder:

Willa Carson
Community Health
Resources Center

"I want my friends to stop dying at the bus stop..."



## Willa's Community

## Greenwood Community-Clearwater, Florida

Population – African Americans and Mexicans

#### Environmental Challenges

- Lead high hazard area
- First state designated brownfields area
- First Environmental Justice Action Agenda for a Brownfields area by a local government in the Nation

## Willa's Challenge

- Medically underserved area
- Disease burden
  - Diabetes
  - Asthma
  - Cancers

#### Health Disparities

- susceptibility (e.g., pre-existing health conditions)
- differential exposure (e.g., multiple exposures, subsistence consumption),
- differential preparedness (e.g., poor nutrition, cultural practices),
- differential recovery ability (e.g., little to no employersupported sick leave).

## Willa's Gift: Greenwood Community Health Resource Center





Before After

## Willa's Gift: Willa Carson Community Health Resource Center

- Contaminated site was remediated
- 7000 community residents receive free, bi-lingual health care annually
  - ■Direct community health services: primary care, immunizations, physicals, referrals to specialists
  - ■Health promotion and education activities: weight loss, exercise and nutrition counseling
  - ■Community service activities: meeting space
- New Jobs for community residents

#### Lesson Learned

- Focus on human health
  - magnet to bring diverse stakeholders together
  - overcame distrust and antagonism
  - neutralized causality and liability challenges

- Improvements to health status facilitate resolution of other complex issues
  - ► How clean is clean (remediation approach)

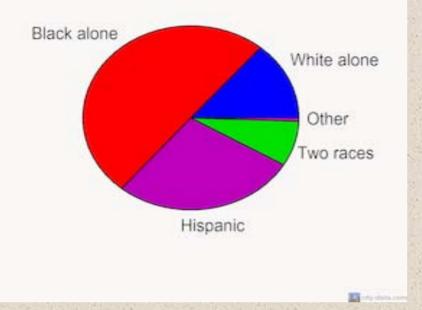
## Meet Cynthia Laramore

## Blacks on the Serious Side/ ACTION

"We want to be protected against actual circumstances of exposure to pollution and not be treated like the mythical reference dose man..."



#### Races in Belle Glade, FL



- One third live below the poverty level
- Health Challenges-
  - AIDs, STDs, TB,
  - ▶ 60% licensed dwellings do not meet basic health and safety standards; 10% housing lacks plumbing and kitchen facilities

## Cynthia 's Community: Belle Glade





## Cynthia's Challenge: Drinking Water Contamination

- Environmental Challenges –
  - packing plants; sugar mills; railroads; numerous citrus, sod, and cattle farms; and co-generation plants
  - Drinking water sources contaminated
    - ► Lake Okeechobee
    - Public Water Supply System Non-compliance
    - People pay more than double the amount for water and sewer service than residents of Palm Beach and state average





## Cynthia's Gift



- Alternative water supply
- Upgrade of PWS and WWT facilities
- Restoration of LakeOkeechobee



#### Lesson Learned

- Decisions should be based on input of those directly affected
- Avoid a theoretical assessment
- Cumulative risk should guide decisionmaking

### Meet Rick Kennan

President: Florida
Brownfields Association

"While you cannot please all the stakeholders all the time, providing an opportunity for wide reaching collaboration offers the best opportunity to ensure successful redevelopment and sustainable communities."



## Rick's Community

#### Diverse Stakeholders:

 property owners, developers, government, planners, regulatory experts, legal experts, financial and insurance industry representatives, and environmental professionals, and community leaders.



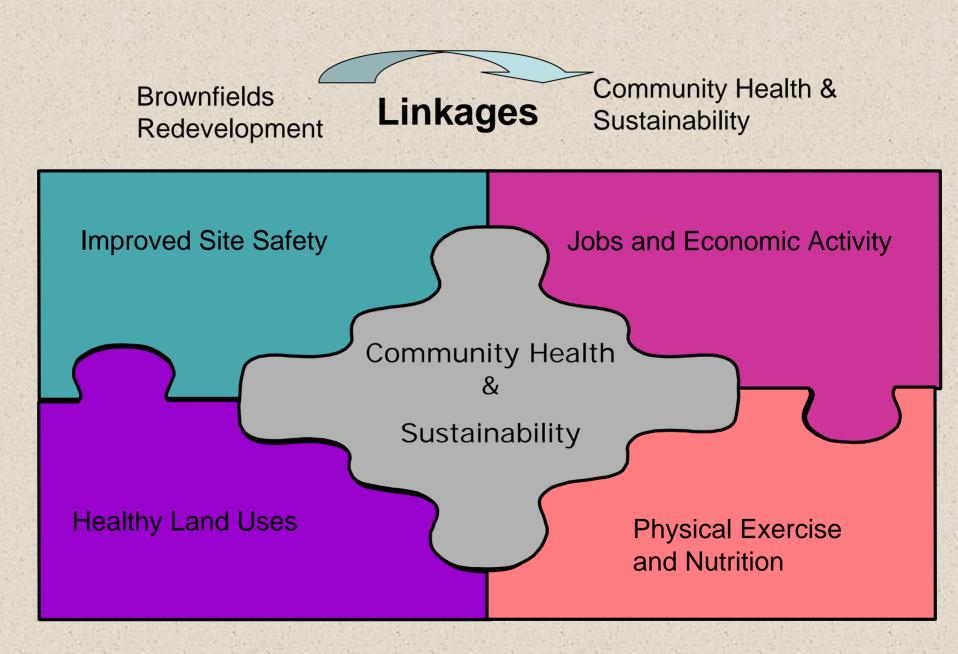
## Rick's Challenge







#### \*Rick's Gift: Putting the Puzzle Pieces Together





- **Environmental Justice**
- Public Health
- Action
  - Convening Diverse Stakeholders
  - Education on Methods and Models
  - Legislative Advocacy

#### Lesson Learned

- It is the surprise stakeholder that can derail a project
- ► Understanding the entire group of stakeholders, getting them involved and addressing their concerns is often the best approach to avoiding unforeseen obstacles.
- Collaboration with the full range of stakeholders makes economic, environmental and health sense.

#### Meet Bart Bibler

#### Florida Department of Health

"Connecting the dots between government agencies, among the public we serve, and finding the intersection of diverse interests helps to ensure healthy communities."

Bart Bibler Bureau Chief, Water Programs



## Bart's Community

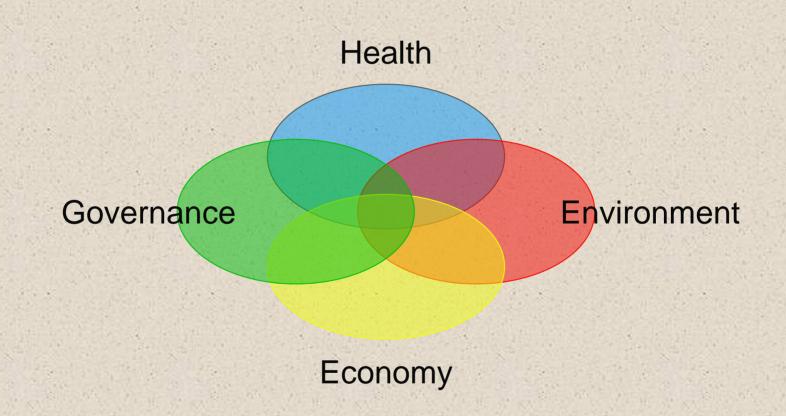
- As a state public servant:
  - Florida residents and visitors
  - Government agencies at all levels
  - Businesses
  - Non-profit organizations



## Bart's Challenge

- >Silo effect:
  - Laws and regulations do not foster interagency collaboration
  - Resource limitations constrain a multidisciplinary approach to problem solving
  - Communication gaps hinder effective responses

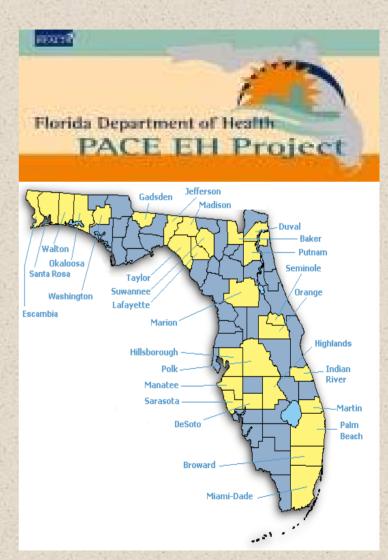
## Bart's Gift: Finding the Common Ground for Community Health



## Department of Health's Gift

#### A Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence In Environmental Health

- Opens lines of communication between local health departments and community
- Engages multiple agencies at all levels of government
- Empowers community residents to address environmental health concerns



### **Lessons Learned**

 Greatest success achieved through collaboration between agencies and communities

Navigate multi-level governments to coordinate an interagency strategy

Apply multidisciplinary approach

## Continuum of Time



#### MERCY HOSPITAL 1923-1966

Provided caring medical treatment for St. Petersburg's African-American residents

> Offered economic and educational opportunities

Served as a centerpiece of the black community

Recognized in 1994 by the City of St. Petersburg for its historical significance











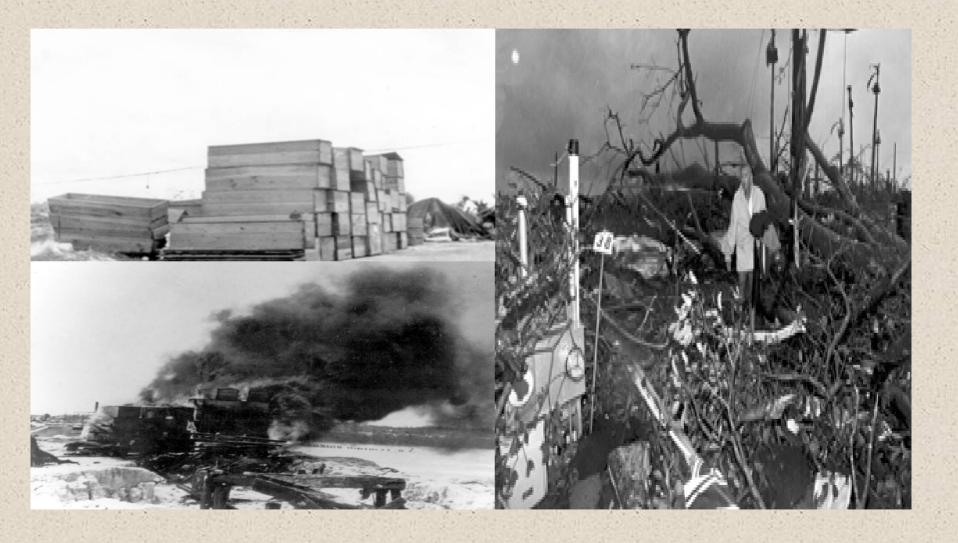






SOCIAL SERVICES Jehnnie Ruth Clarke (1919-1978)

## Urgency of Time



## Gift of Time



